

# CASTLEMAINE

# NATURALIST



February '84 N:87

## PLANTS OF THE CASTLEMAINE DISTRICT

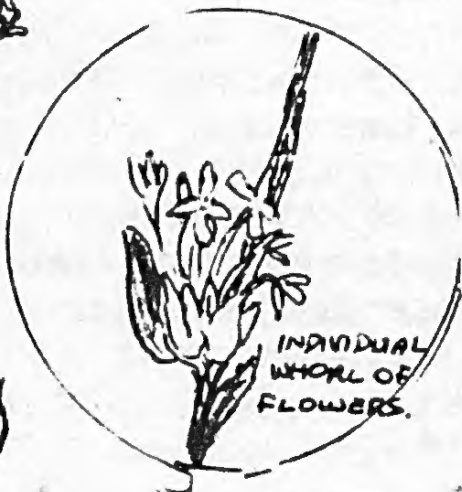
A SERIES, by Rita Mills

### CURVED RICEFLOWER, *Pimelea curviflora*

Until this last season I had only once seen the Curved riceflower in Kalimna. It was a very small specimen, not a bit impressive. Last Nov/Dec I saw hundreds of them, not only in Kalimna, but also along the railway reserve near our home.

They are quite a small shrublet, up to 15 cm high, rather hairy, with the silky hairs pressed against the unbranching stems and leaf backs. The quite tiny dull yellow flowers are in whorls or clusters in the leaf bases.

I'm not sure whether they were more common this year, or it was just that I got up into the bush more often later in the year than I am used to because of the Bushwalking group. The plants are certainly not at all showy, and could easily be missed



concluding a series by Terry Collins

### LEGLESS LIZARDS

They cover a large range of habitat and exhibit little diversity of body form. All are long and slender, with tails much longer than their bodies. All have fleshy tongues, distinct from the forked tongues of snakes, and definite ear openings. Limbs are absent, but there are remnants of the hind limbs as scaled flaps. Most are insectivorous, though the larger species do eat small skinks and geckoes. Though less numerous than skinks, some species, 'Delma', are found in spinifex and in winter may shelter in the litter at the base of the bush. During the warmer months, especially in spring, some of the larger Legless Lizards can be seen between bushes or on tracks at night. One of the larger species, the Blackheaded Scalefoot, mimics the juvenile Brown Snake, including similar colouration, strike, and threat posture, and hissing. The lizard is purely bluffing and although it may strike it can do no harm.

### GOANNAS

These are an unusual and impressive family of lizards, 'Varanidae'. They have some features in common with snakes such as long forked tongues and sinuous bodies. They have four powerful legs and most goannas can dig efficiently, climb trees with ease and outpace the fleetest man, especially over rough terrain. They range in size from the giant Perentie down to the small monitors less than 30cm in length. The Perentie is one of the largest lizards in the world, reaching nearly 3m in length. All goannas have long, triangular heads, long necks and tails. In several rock dwelling species the tail is spiny or rough to help the animal in crevices. All are carnivores or insectivores and most include other reptiles in their diet. The larger species catch mammals and are significant predators of introduced pests such as mice. Some species, such as the Lace Monitor, will also eat birds and birds' eggs, occasionally to the ire of chicken keepers. Some goannas, like 'Goulds Sand Goanna', are very common. They live amongst tree limbs in river beds, especially dead trees with hollows where they can sleep. In rocky areas they live in suitable crevices.



A Back view  
of the Lace Monitor  
- which belies its  
agility somewhat!

Cont. on back page

V.F.N.C.A. LABOUR DAY ANNUAL GET-TOGETHER, CRESWICK

March 10-12 '84

Creswick Hon sec - Mrs J. King, Church St., Creswick, 3663.

President - Mr Harry Barklay, 32 Raglan St., Creswick. 3663.

Marie Allender has booked Creswick Motel, Cushing Ave., and a few caravans in the Caravan Park - (Cr Cushing Ave., and Albert St., 200 metres from the Post office).

There are also adequate Camping Ground facilities.

Program

Saturday March 10      1pm. St Pauls Hall, Napier St., Creswick.  
                                 Afternoon excursion of Historical and  
                                 Geological interest.  
                                 8pm Slides, Nature Talks, and Get-together.  
                                 St. Pauls Hall. Supper

Sunday, March 11      9.30 am - 4.30 pm. All day excursion. Bring  
                                 picnic lunch.  
                                 8 pm St Pauls Hall. Club reports and Social.

Monday March 12      9.30 am - 12 noon. Escursion. Bring picnic lunch.  
                                 1 pm Farewells.

Regent Honeyeater Survey

We have recieved a request, and survey forms, from the BENDIGO F.N.C. Bird Observers Group for observations of the Regent Honeyeater. The bird has declined in numbers over the past few years and they are interested in researching the reasons for the decline. If you have any observations or records of the bird and habitat it would be appreciated. Contact John Robinson, P.O. Strathfieldsaye, 3551.

From the Editor -

I'd like to take this opportunity to express my heart-felt thanks to all the contributors to the magazine over the past twelve months. In particular I must mention Terry Collins and Ern Perkins, whose articles and help have been much appreciated by me, and I know, the Club too. Also, Stan and Audrey Bruton's contributions have been appreciated.

But it's not only the longer articles and lists of birds and flowers that make a magazine, and the small 'snippets' also are important to the interest of the magazine.

I hope that whoever takes on the Editor's job this year will never find the folder short of articles, no matter how long or how brief!

## CLUB PROGRAMME

### Meetings

February 10 ANNUAL MEETING Speaker Prof. John Turner, 'Beginnings'.

March 9 Geoff Sitch. Plant propagation.

April 13 International Night. Dr. Champion, 'Walking in Nepal'

General Meetings are held in the High School, Lawson Pde. on the second Friday of each month, at 8 pm, though the rooms are open 20 minutes or so before that. Non-members are always welcome at these meetings and the outings.

February 23 Committee meeting

March 22 Committee Meeting

The committee Meeting is held in the Education Centre, Mostyn St. at 7.30 pm on the 4th Thursday of each month. All members are welcome to attend these meetings.

### Outings

February 11 Bell's Swamp, Laarnacoorie. Leaders - K. Turner, M. Oliver. Leave the S.E.C. at 1.30 pm sharp.

March 10-12. Victorian Field Naturalists Clubs association Campout at Creswick. (See p 3) Cars will be leaving the S.E.C. at 12 o'clock sharp.

April 14 Lyonville Springs. S. Bruton

May 12 Oak forest, Harcourt.

*Cont. from p. 2.*

Goannas will move quickly away at mans' approach, and the smaller tree dwelling goannas are hard to find.

If you are searching for lizards you will certainly find many other fascinating animals. Your appreciation of Australias natural treasures will inevitably increase and lizards truly have a lot to offer.